



Photo credit: Kim Lim

Call for Abstracts

The 3rd Maine Occupational Safety & Health Symposium

May 25 & 26, 2005
University of New England
at Biddeford

Occupational Safety & Health Issues of Special Populations

The Maine Department of Labor, in collaboration with the Maine Occupational Safety & Health Research Agenda Workgroup (MORA) and the University of New England will be hosting the 3rd Maine OSH Research Symposium.

Special populations are workers who are frequently under-represented in traditional occupational health research. They include young and older workers, immigrants, migrant & seasonal workers, minorities, disabled workers and others.

The Symposium will provide an avenue for researchers, policymakers, practitioners, academics, employers, and labor leaders to exchange and promote intervention ideas to enhance the occupational safety and health of special populations.

About MORA

The Maine Occupational Research Agenda, or MORA, promotes occupational safety and health research in Maine. MORA is modeled after the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA). NIOSH is a major contributor to both the first and second Maine symposiums. MORA Steering Committee members represent a broad spectrum of Maine's occupational safety and health community. Members include medical providers, occupational safety and health and public health professionals, government and labor representatives, insurance professionals, and academia.

For more information on MORA, please visit the MORA Web site: www.Maine.gov/labor/bls/MORA.htm#about

The Changing Face of the American Worker

When the Occupational Safety and Health Act was established in the 1970s to protect the American worker, the demographics of the workforce then was predominantly male, in his 30s and working in the manufacturing sector. Thirty years later the American workforce is older and much more ethnically diverse. Today, many work in the service sector and far fewer are employed in manufacturing. Many of our workers, especially in the food and agriculture sector, come from other lands with limited English skills.

The limited or lack of participation by some of these workers in the Workers' Compensation and Unemployment Insurance programs and the seasonality and transient nature of employment hinder effective OSH surveillance. Compounding this limitation is the language barrier among non-English speaking workers, their unfamiliarity with the Workers' Compensation System and hesitancy to report work-related injuries, resulting in under-reporting of injuries. Without good surveillance data, addressing the OSH needs of special populations presents a challenge.

The following are the objectives of the 3rd Maine Occupational Safety & Health Research Symposium:

- a) To further increase the awareness of Maine and other New England States' occupational safety and health communities on the occupational safety and health issues of special populations.
- b) Stimulate the exchange of intervention ideas between researchers, policymakers, practitioners, academia, employers, and labor leaders to enhance the occupational safety and health of special populations.
- c) Continued development and promotion of OSH research via the Maine Occupational Safety and Health Research Agenda (MORA)

Abstract Guidelines

(Due date: Oct. 31, 2004)

Interested presenters are invited to submit a 250-word abstract on existing research, describe effective or failed workplace practices and policies or propose new projects, concepts, or models to address any of the following OSH issues of special populations:

Track 1: Challenges in OSH Surveillance & Epidemiology of Special Populations

Track 2: OSH Issues/Needs Assessment of Special Populations

Track 3: OSH Research on Special Populations

Track 4: Best OSH Practices

Your abstract must address the following points, which will be rated in the selection process:

- Overview of OSH issue of the specific special population
- OSH issue addressed (interventions/surveillance/needs assessment/best practice)
- Summary of findings, "take home message" for the attendees and future directions

(Please include your contact information: title, organization, e-mail, phone/fax#)

Please respond by e-mail to: kim.c.lim@maine.gov

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